

STARBLAZER

SPACE FICTION ADVENTURE IN PICTURES No. 55

14p



TARGET EARTH

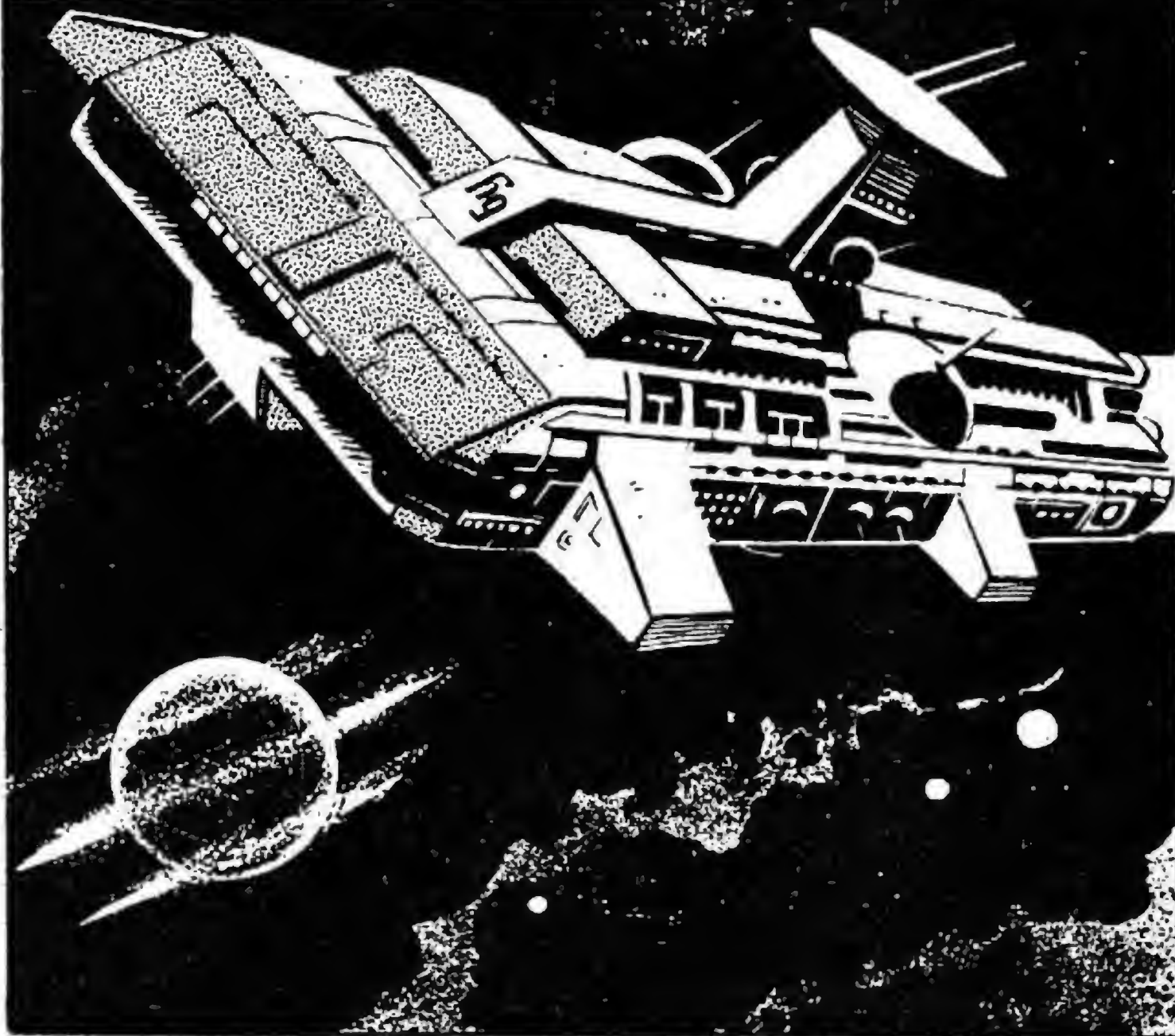
STARBLAZER



AS EARTH'S EXPLORATION THROUGH SPACE ADVANCED, NOT A SINGLE INTELLIGENT LIFEFORM WAS DISCOVERED. UNINHABITED WORLDS WERE TERRA-FORMED AND EVENTUALLY COLONISED BY SETTLERS FROM EARTH. AFTER A MILLENNIA OF COLONISATION THE FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH A LIFEFORM TOOK PLACE. AND IT WAS A NIGHTMARE. THE HORDES FROM CETUS GALAXY RAVAGED COLONIES AND TRANSPORTED THE INHABITANTS BACK TO CETUS TO WORK IN LIFE-SAPPING CONDITIONS. ALTHOUGH THE PRISONERS WERE FROM DIFFERENT PLANETS, THEY HAD ONE COMMON BOND — THEY ALL HAD THEIR ORIGINS WITH PLANET EARTH, NOW A DIM AND DISTANT PIECE OF LEGEND.

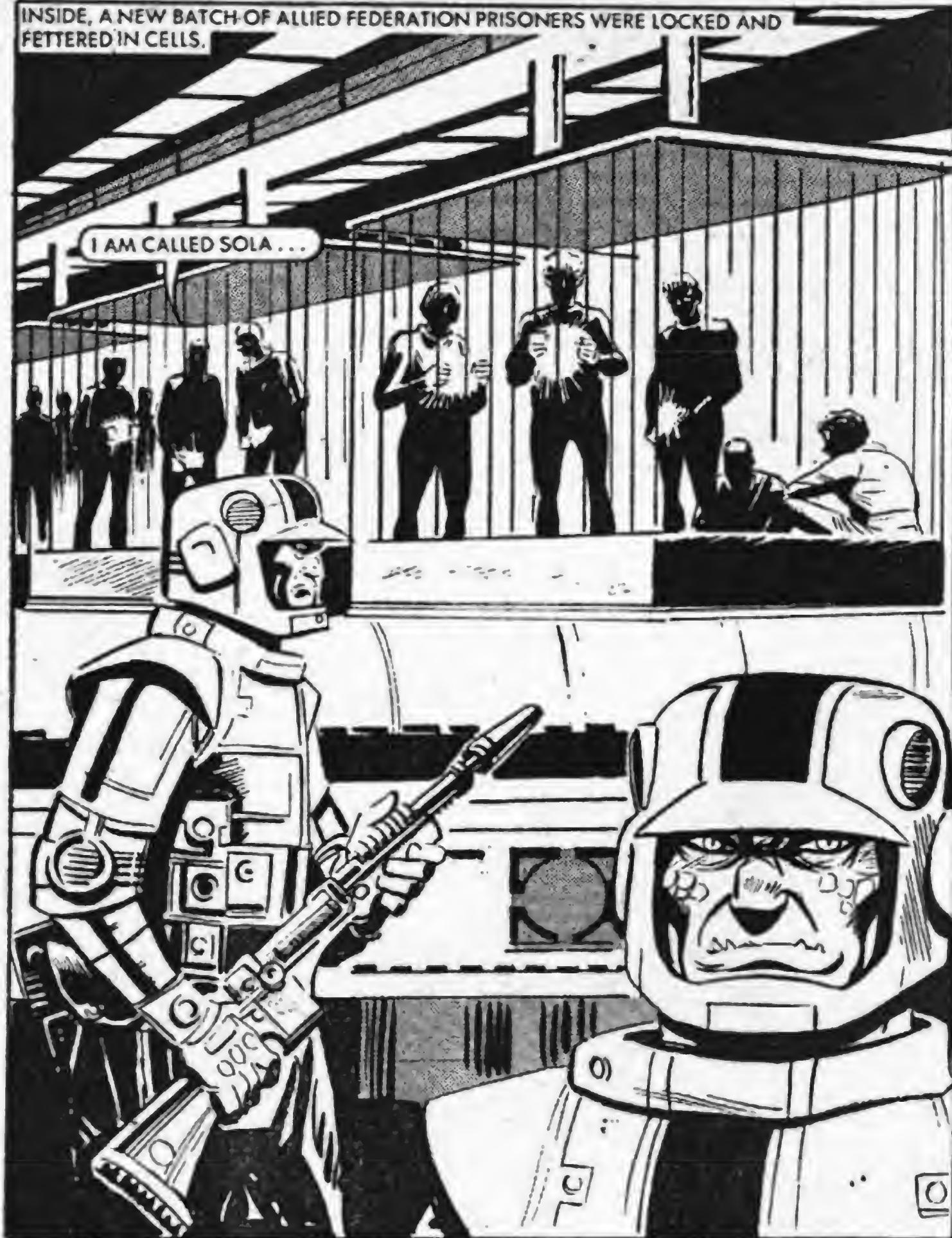
TARGET EARTH

A CETIAN CARGO VESSEL WARPED A NEW BATCH OF PRISONERS TO CETUS IX.



INSIDE, A NEW BATCH OF ALLIED FEDERATION PRISONERS WERE LOCKED AND FETTERED IN CELLS.

I AM CALLED SOLA ...



AND I AM GALT. THIS CRAFT IS SO
RAMSHACKLE WE COULD BREAK
OUT.

HUMANS! REFRAIN FROM USING THAT
ACCURSED LANGUAGE.

EVEN THOUGH CETIANS
WORE STANDARD TRANSLATOR PACKS, THEY ABHORRED THE USE OF ENGLISH.



WHY WON'T THEY LET US
USE THE TERRAN TONGUE?

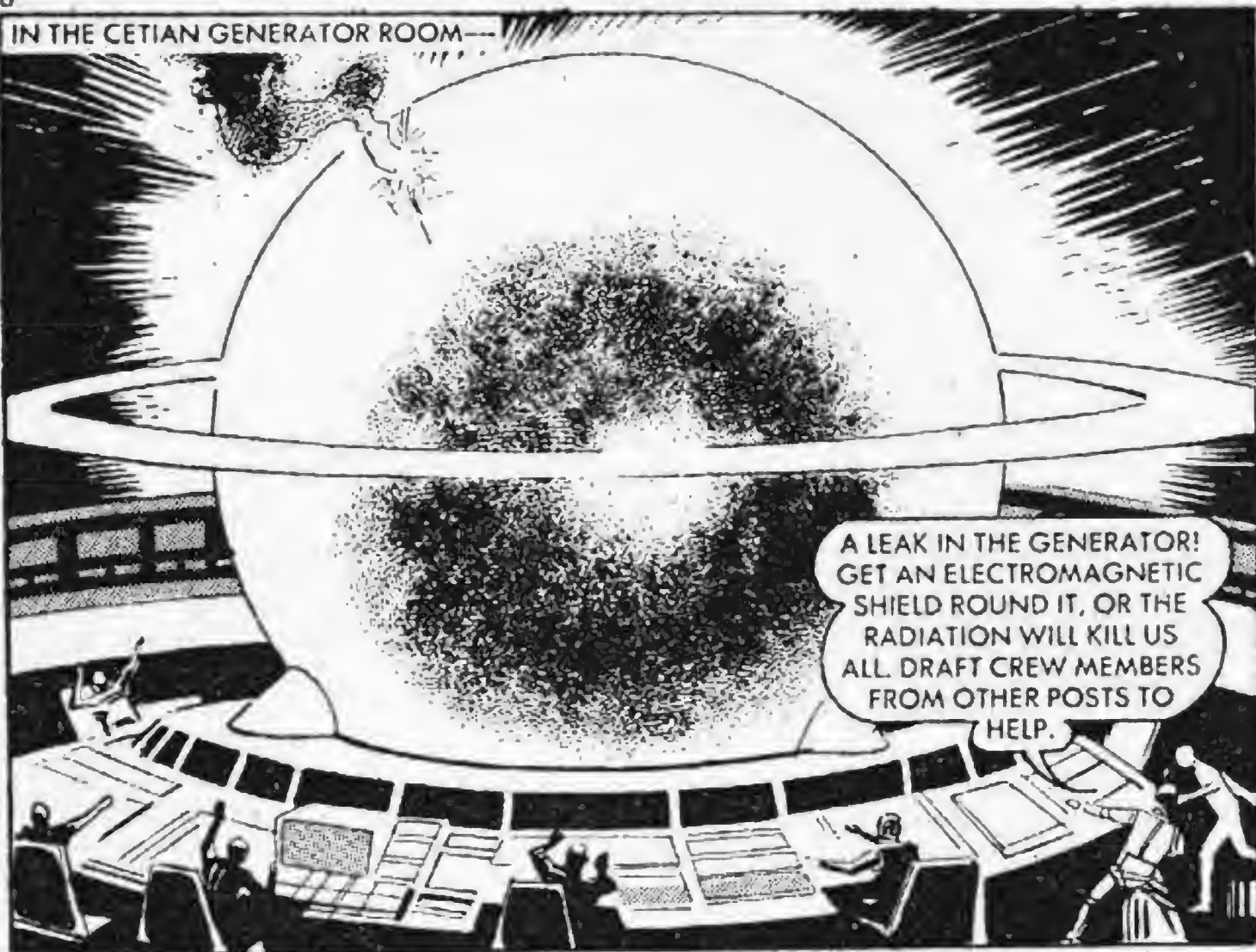
BECAUSE IT'S THE LANGUAGE
OF OUR GALAXY—A
GALAXY THEY WANT TO
DOMINATE.

YOU MEAN THE EARTH EMPIRE?

YES—ALTHOUGH WE LIVE ON WORLDS MANY LIGHT
YEARS DISTANT FROM EARTH, AND HAVE NO CONTACT
WITH THE MOTHER PLANET, IT IS OUR ONLY HOPE OF
DEFEATING THE CETIANS. ALAS, THE CO-ORDINATES OF
EARTH ARE LOST IN THE MISTS OF TIME.



IN THE CETIAN GENERATOR ROOM—



THE PRISONERS WATCHED AS THEIR
GUARDS RESPONDED TO THE EMERGENCY
IN THE ENGINE ROOM.



THIS IS OUR OPPORTUNITY.
LET'S GET TO WORK ON THESE BARS.

SILENTLY THE HUMANS FORCED AN
OPENING IN THE OLD NEGLECTED AND
CORRODED METAL.



WAIT UNTIL HE'S
RIGHT UNDERNEATH.





THE COMBOX WAS A REMOTE CONTROL KEY LINKED TO THE COMPUTER.







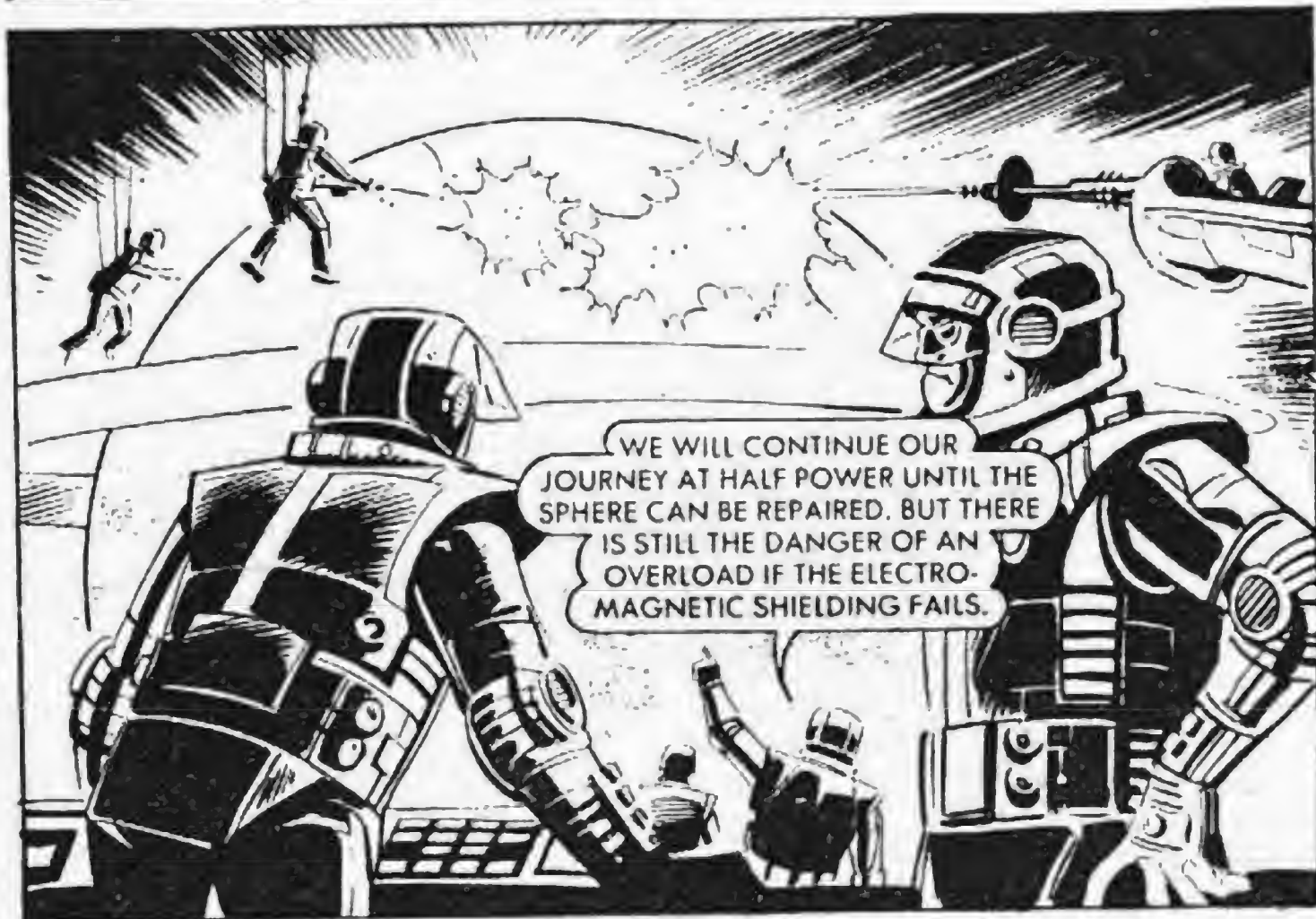
SPEAKING IN CETIAN, SOLA ASKED A QUESTION—





ON THE BRIDGE, THE DAMAGE TO THE GENERATOR WAS BEING CAREFULLY MONITORED.





OBLIVIOUS TO THE CONDITION OF THE SHIP, THE ESCAPED PRISONERS PLANNED TO TAKE IT OVER.

SPACE KNOWS WHERE THE CETIAN GUARDS ARE.
ALL THE BETTER, BECAUSE WE'RE
GOING TO STORM THE BRIDGE.



THREE OF US WILL BE SUFFICIENT TO TAKE THE
BRIDGE. THE OTHERS CAN GUARD THE ARMOURY
AND LIFEBOATS—IN CASE ANYTHING GOES
WRONG.

THIS IS THE PLACE. I'M GOING TO BLAST
THE DOOR. STAY CLOSE BEHIND ME.



A SMALL FUSION CHARGE VAPED THE DOOR TO NOTHINGNESS.

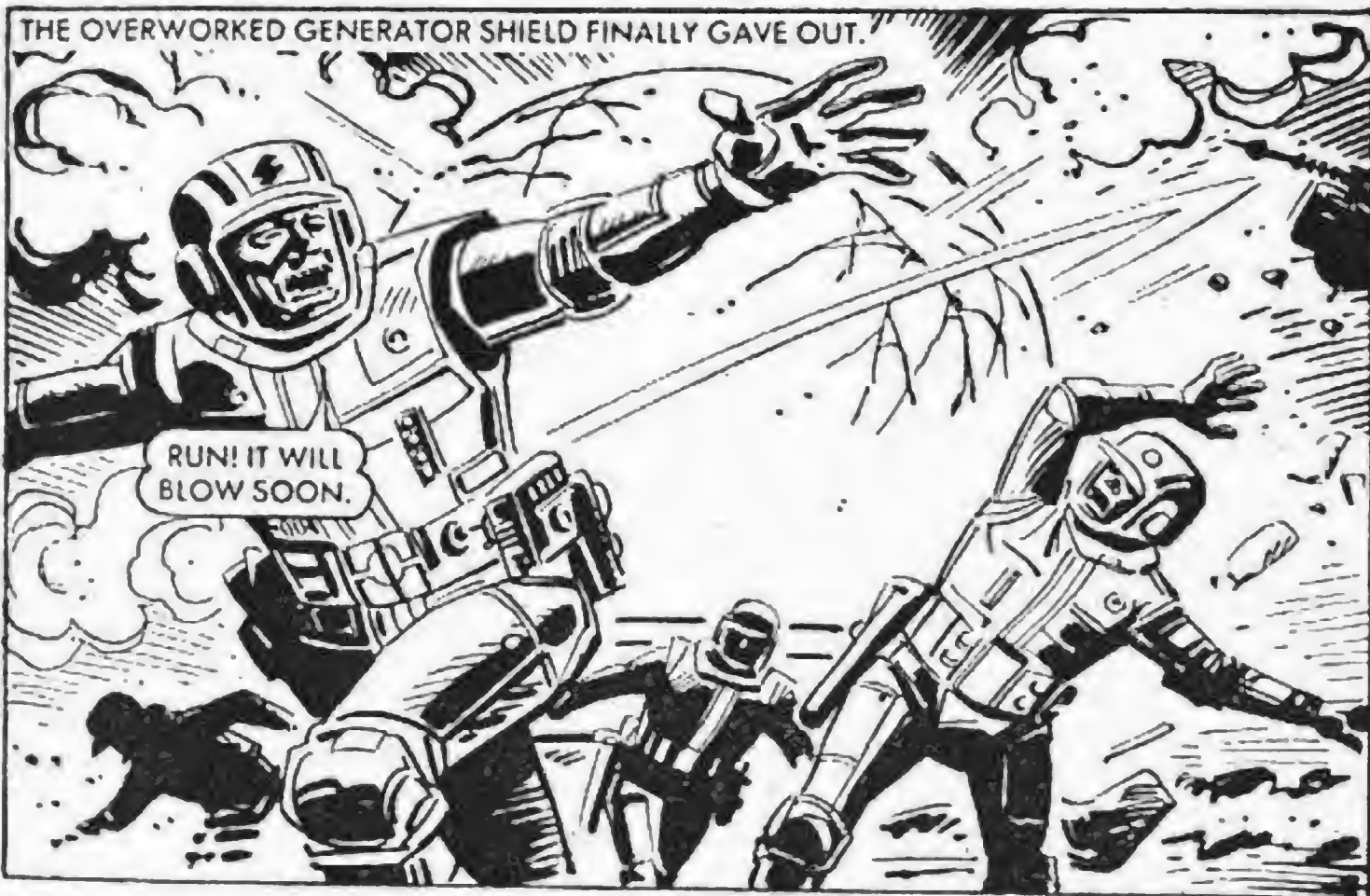
ANYONE I SEE MOVING GETS
BLASTED. WE'RE TAKING THE SHIP.





VANT... CAN YOU PILOT THIS WRECK?

YES... THE CONTROLS ARE STANDARD.



THE OVERWORKED GENERATOR SHIELD FINALLY GAVE OUT.

RUN! IT WILL BLOW SOON.

DOWN BELOW DECKS—

THE PRISONERS...



ON THE BRIDGE—

FULL POWER, VANT, STEER
AWAY FROM CETUS.

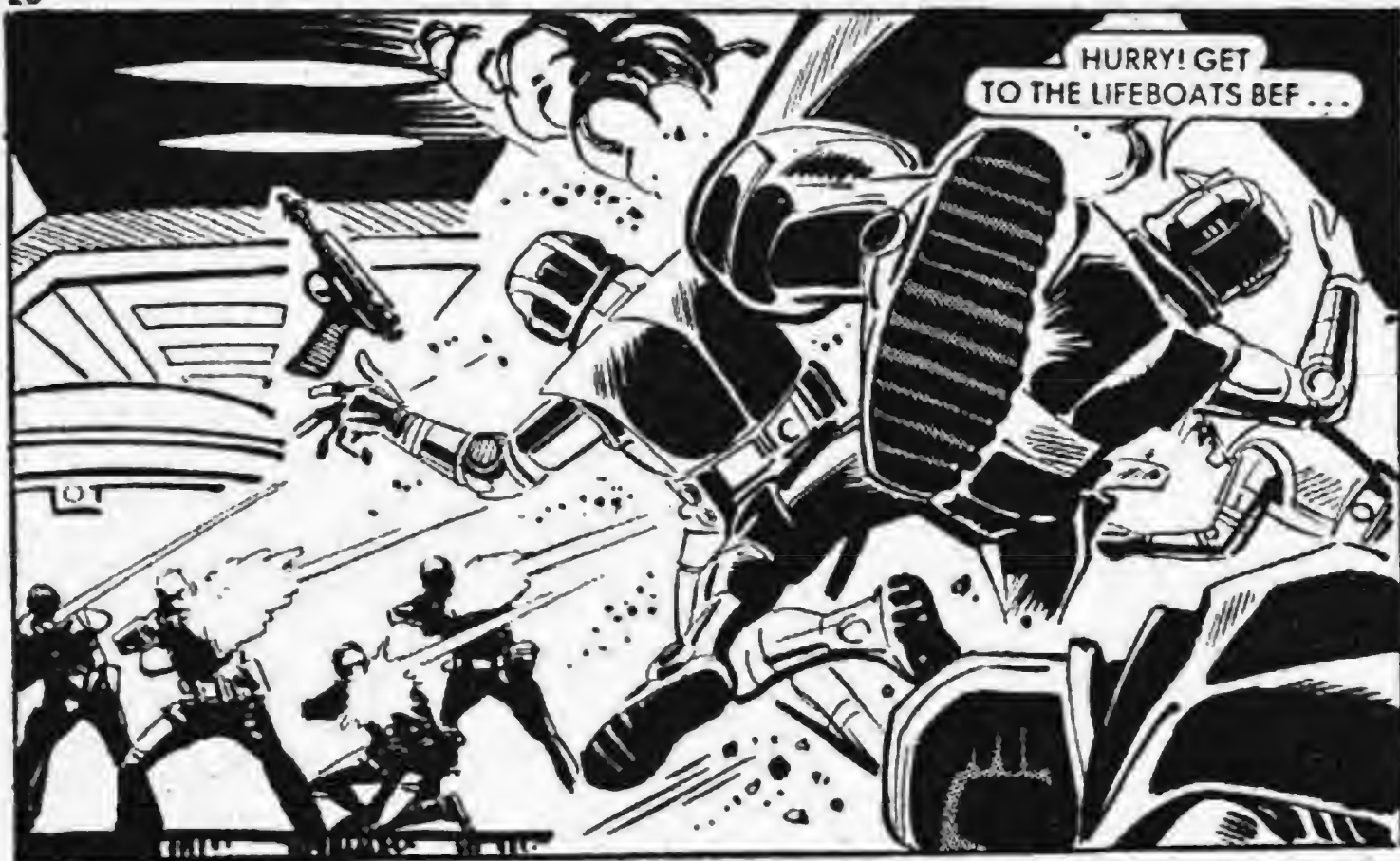
TOTAL DRIVE ENGAGED.

LET THE MORONS BURN OUT THE GENERATORS!
WE'LL DRIFT RIGHT INTO ONE OF OUR PATROLS.

pr
GALT! I'M GETTING AN OVERLOAD
WARNING. THE GENERATOR MUST BE
DAMAGED. I'M CUTTING THE POWER,
BEFORE WE EXPLODE!

EVEN AS THE POWER WAS SWITCHED
OFF, THE GENERATOR BLEW.





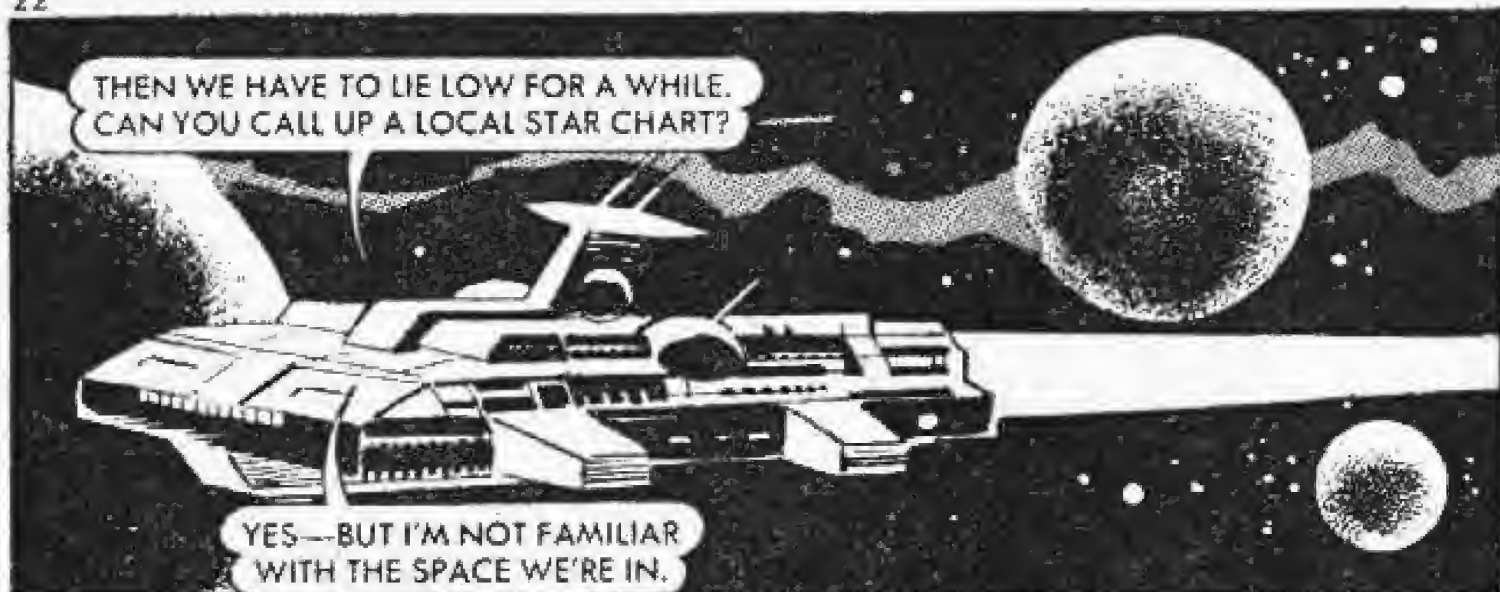
STRIP ALL LIFEBOATS OF COMMUNICATORS AND FUEL, AND PUT THEM IN THERE. THEN WE'LL EJECT THE BOATS. THAT OUGHT TO SLOW UP ANY PATROL SHIPS.



WHAT CHANCE OF REPAIRING THE DAMAGE?

NONE! A SMALL EMERGENCY GENERATOR IS KEEPING EVERYTHING BUT THE ENGINE WORKING, BUT IT WON'T LAST LONG.







THE CETIAN CREW WERE ABANDONED AS VANT
MADE FOR THE SHELTER OF THE NEAR
ASTEROIDS.



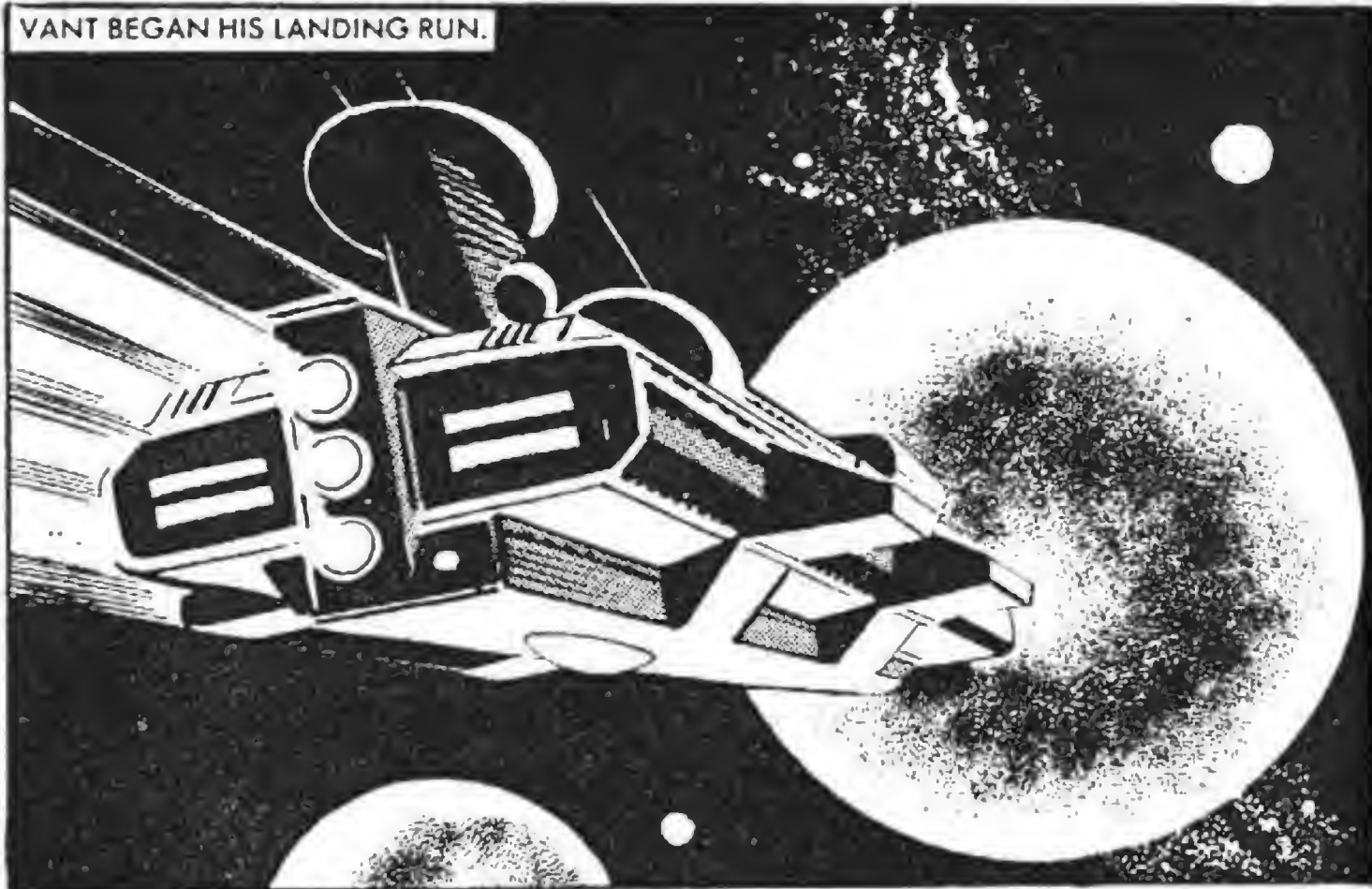
A CETIAN, OVERLOOKED IN THE
CONFUSION, MADE A FUTILE ATTEMPT
TO SAVE THE SHIP...







VANT BEGAN HIS LANDING RUN.







ONE OF THE SCOUTING PARTIES SOON RETURNED.

YOU SAY YOU
FOUND WRECKAGE?

YES, SOLA, ABOUT A MILE FROM
HERE. IT LOOKED LIKE THE REMAINS OF A
SHIP. THE DESIGN WAS DEFINITELY ALIEN.



THE TRIO WARILY WENT TO INVESTIGATE





THEY EXAMINED THE OBJECT.





AS ONE MAN CLAMBERED OVER THE SHIP.







GOT IT. HERE GOES.



THE DOOR HISSED OPEN.



TAKE IT EASY ...



сгубыа/1001ер



WHAT THE...?



IT'S INCREDIBLE! EVERYTHING IS FULLY POWERED, AND THERE'S NO SIGN OF DECAY OR CORROSION.

THE CAPACITY OF THE REACTORS MUST BE ENORMOUS. THEY MUST HAVE BEEN IN USE FOR CENTURIES.





AFTER NEARLY TWO HUNDRED YEARS SERVICE,
MY CLASS BECAME OBSOLETE AND WAS
DESIGNATED FOR DESTRUCTION.

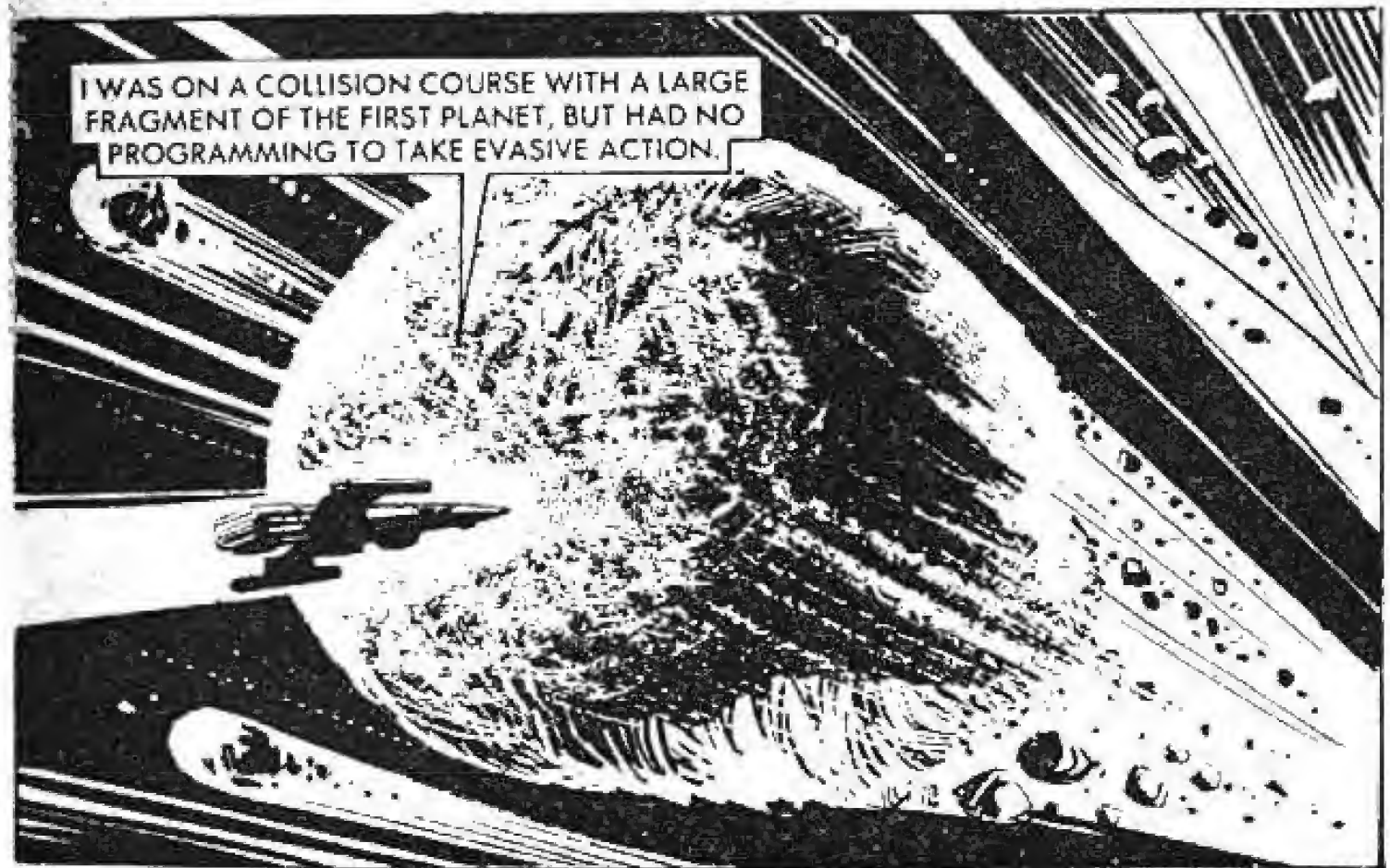


I WAS PROGRAMMED TO ENTER A WHITE
DWARF STAR, AND SO TERMINATE.



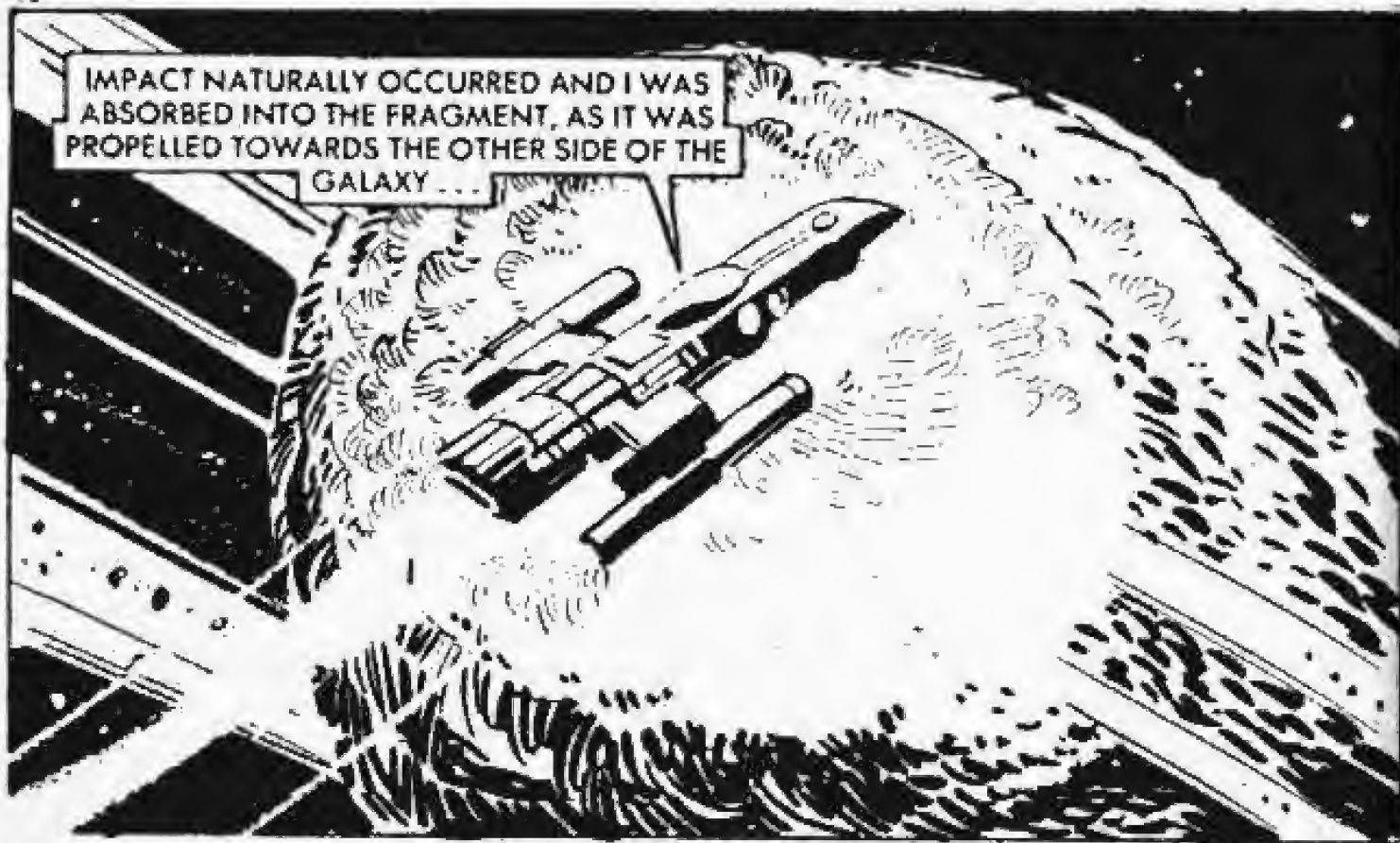


BUT THE STAR WENT NOVA BEFORE ARRIVAL, AND
THE PLANETARY SYSTEM DISSOLVED.



I WAS ON A COLLISION COURSE WITH A LARGE
FRAGMENT OF THE FIRST PLANET, BUT HAD NO
PROGRAMMING TO TAKE EVASIVE ACTION.

IMPACT NATURALLY OCCURRED AND I WAS
ABSORBED INTO THE FRAGMENT, AS IT WAS
PROPELLED TOWARDS THE OTHER SIDE OF THE
GALAXY ...



... TO COME TO REST, WITH MANY OTHER
SUCH FRAGMENTS, IN ORBIT AROUND CETUS,
WHERE I HAVE LAIN FOR OVER FIVE HUNDRED
YEARS. END.





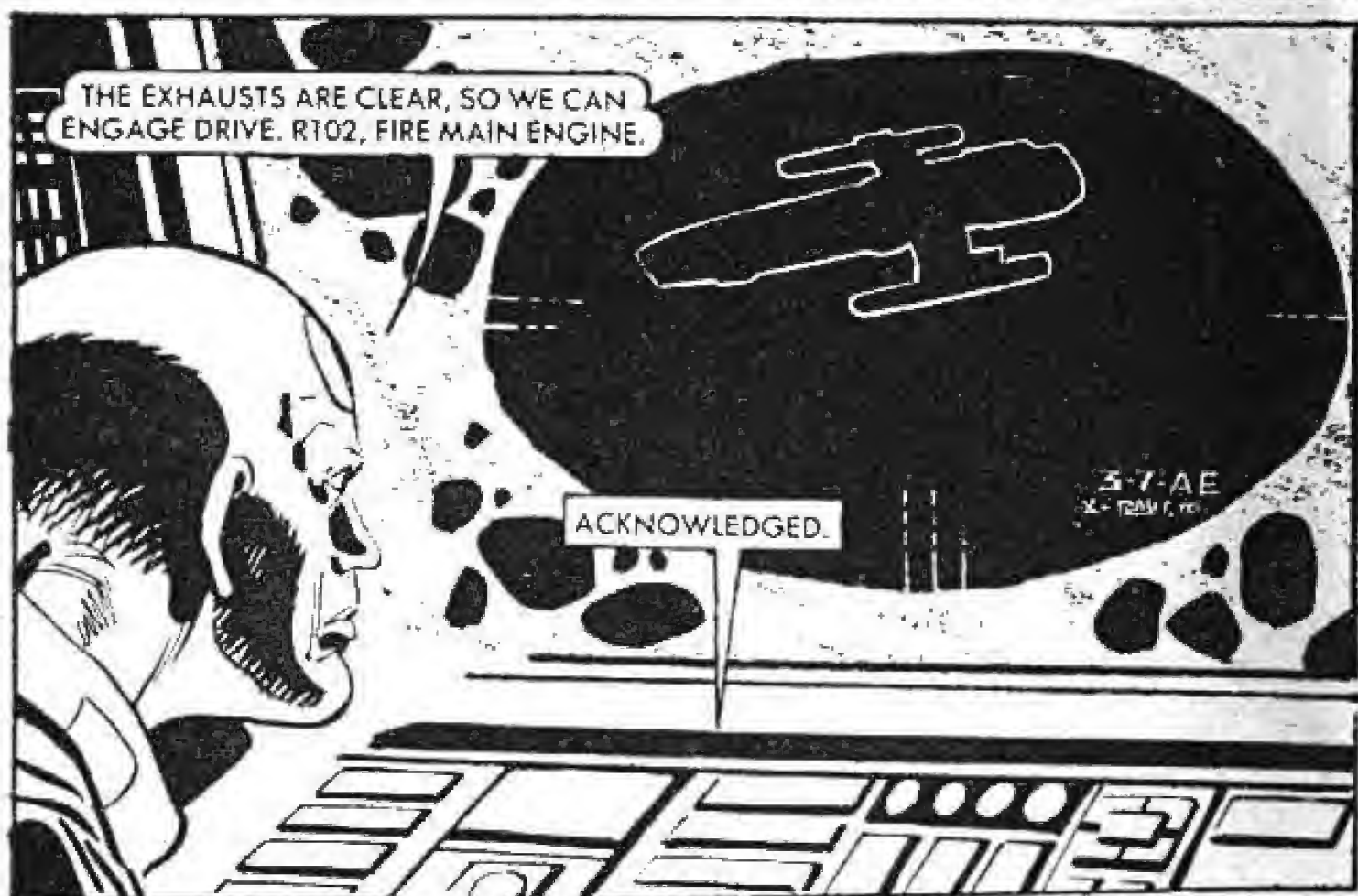
THAT'S THE STORY. WE'RE
IN COMMAND OF AN EARTHSHIP.

WHAT GOOD IS SHE EMBEDDED
IN MEGATONS OF ROCK?

IF YOU GIVE ME THE CHANCE, I THINK SHE CAN
BE GOT CLEAR — SHE'S ENORMOUSLY
POWERFUL. AND THE LOCATION OF EARTH IS IN
HER LOG.



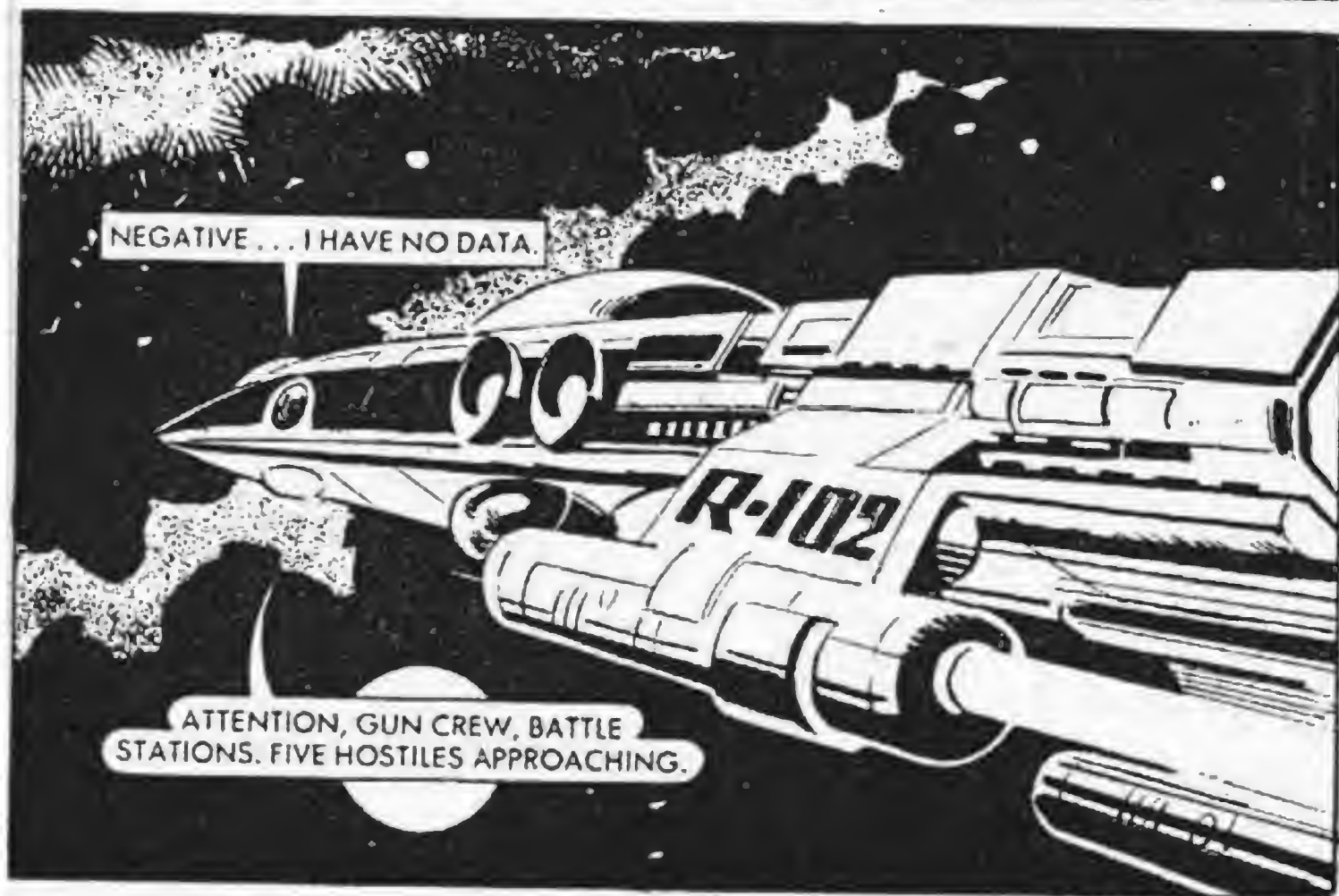
TARGET EARTH... THAT SETTLES IT.
ANY CHANCE OF GETTING TO EARTH IS
WORTH TAKING. WE CAN SEEK THEIR
HELP TO DEFEAT THE CETIANS.

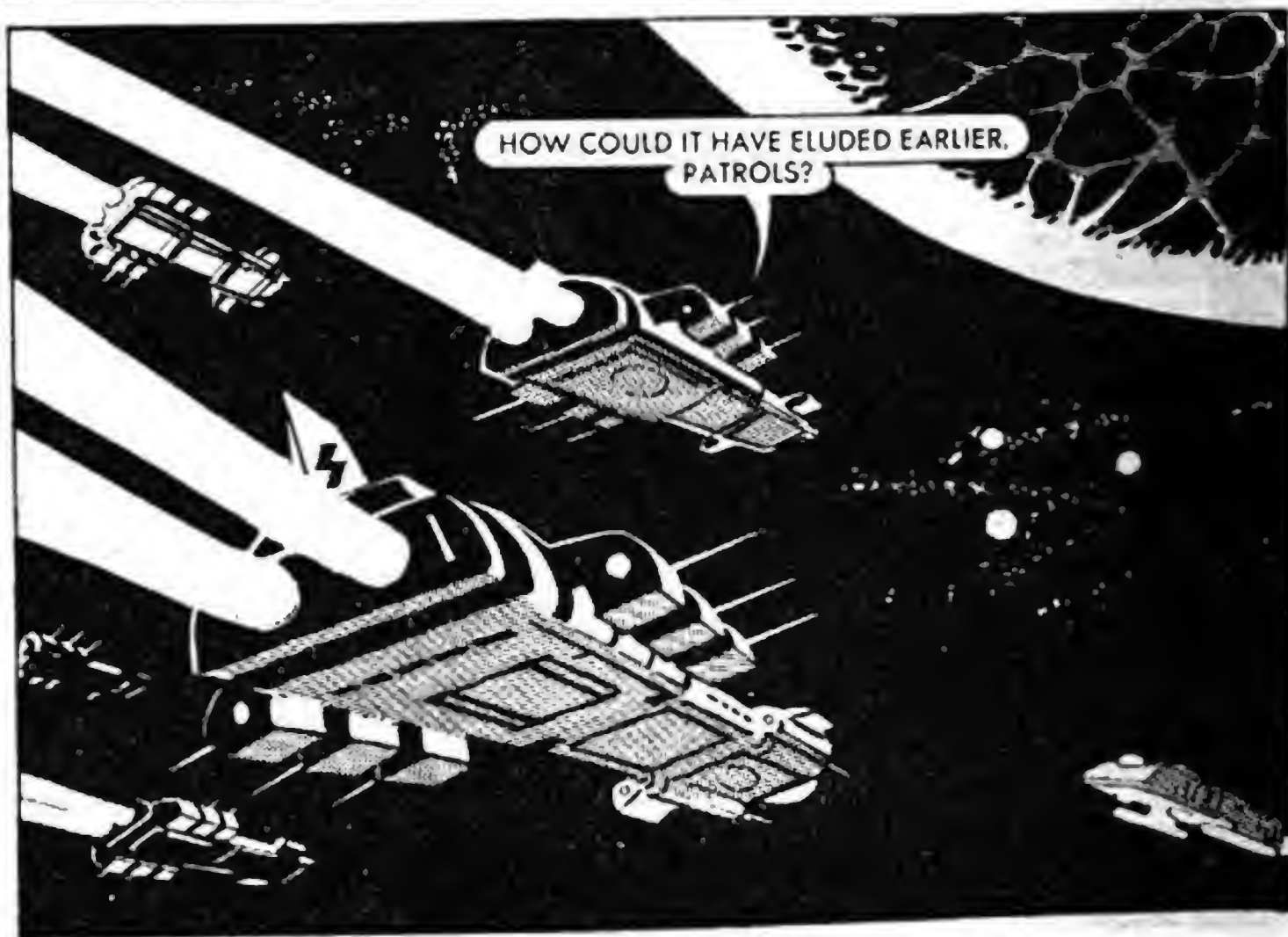
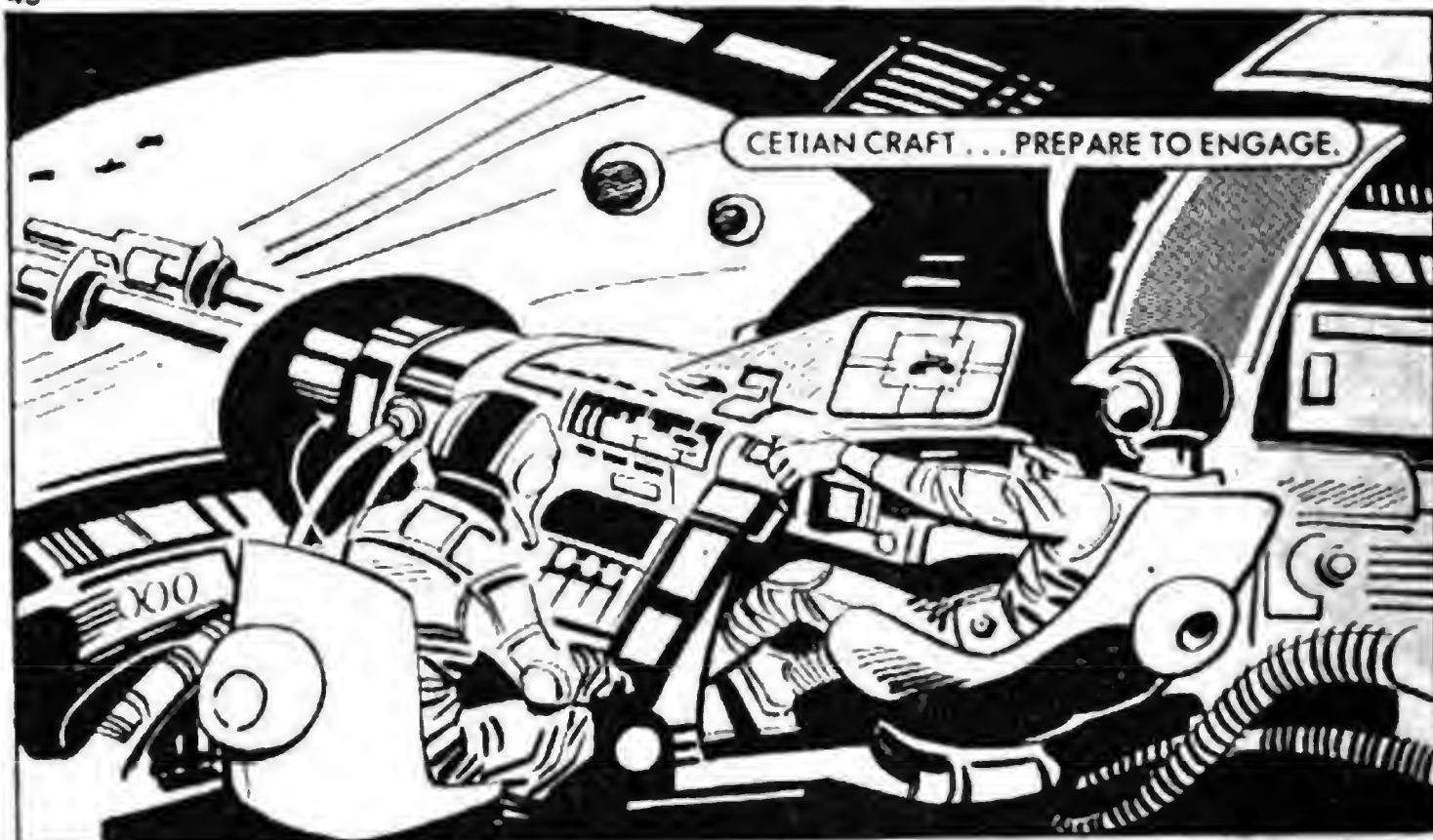


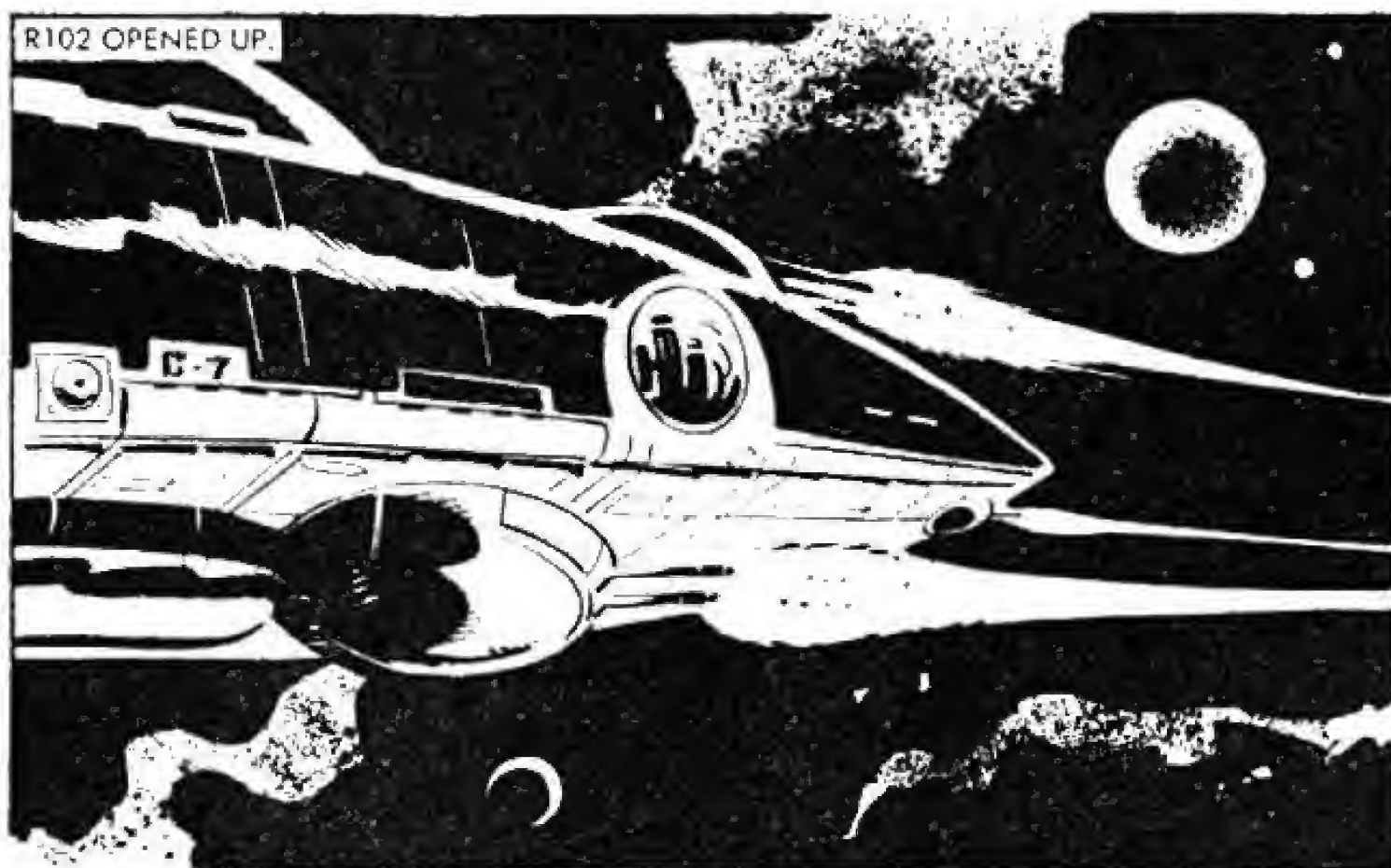
AS R102, AFTER FIVE HUNDRED YEARS, BEGAN TO MOVE, THE ASTEROID STARTED TO BREAK UP.



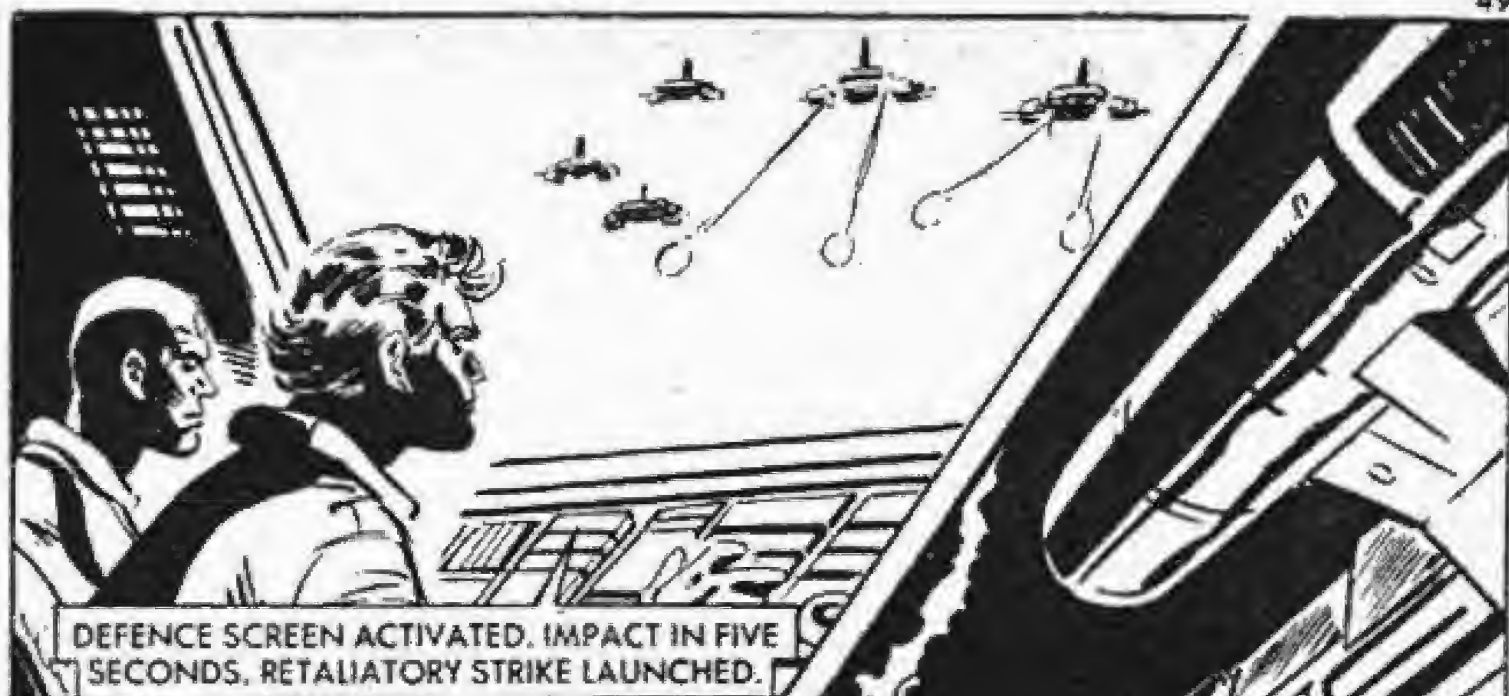






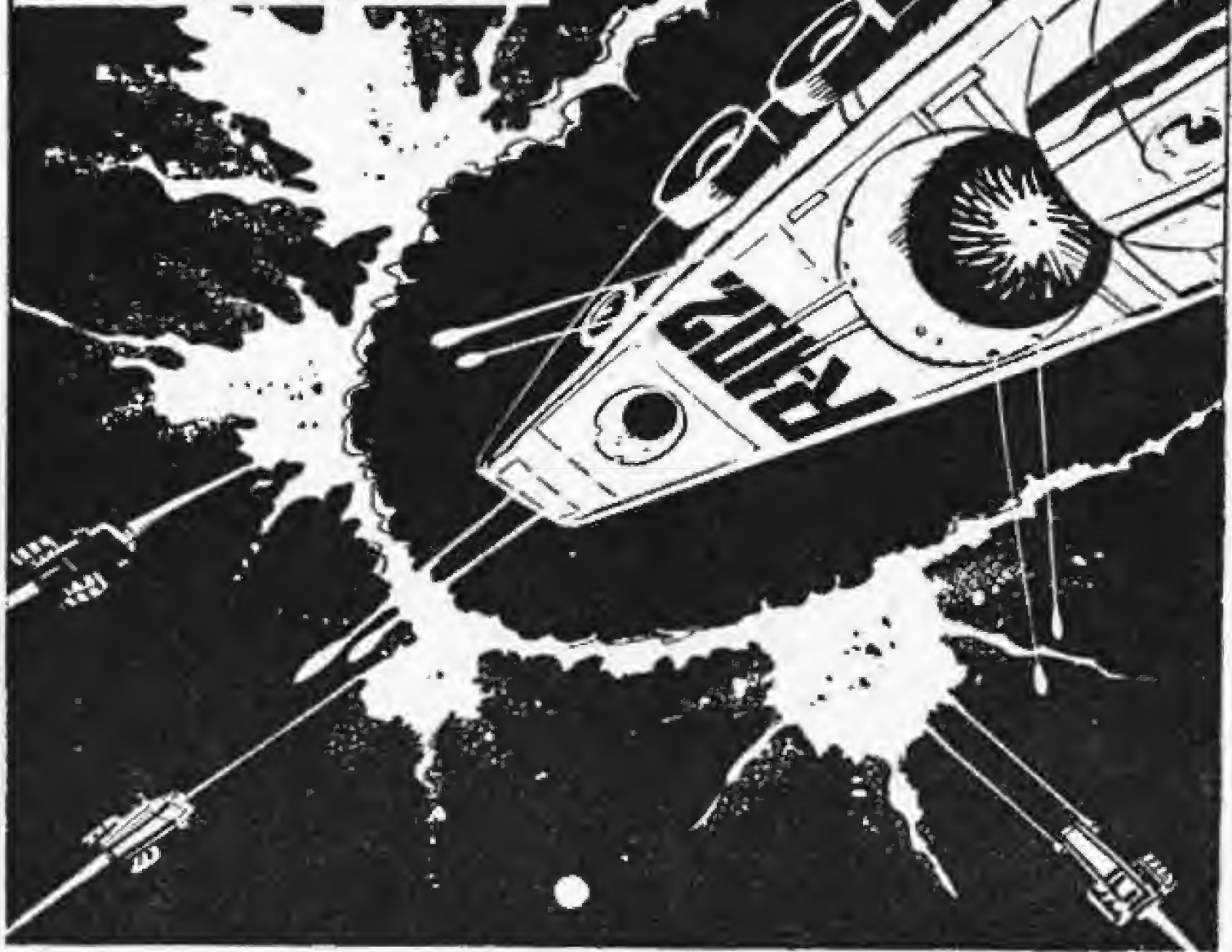




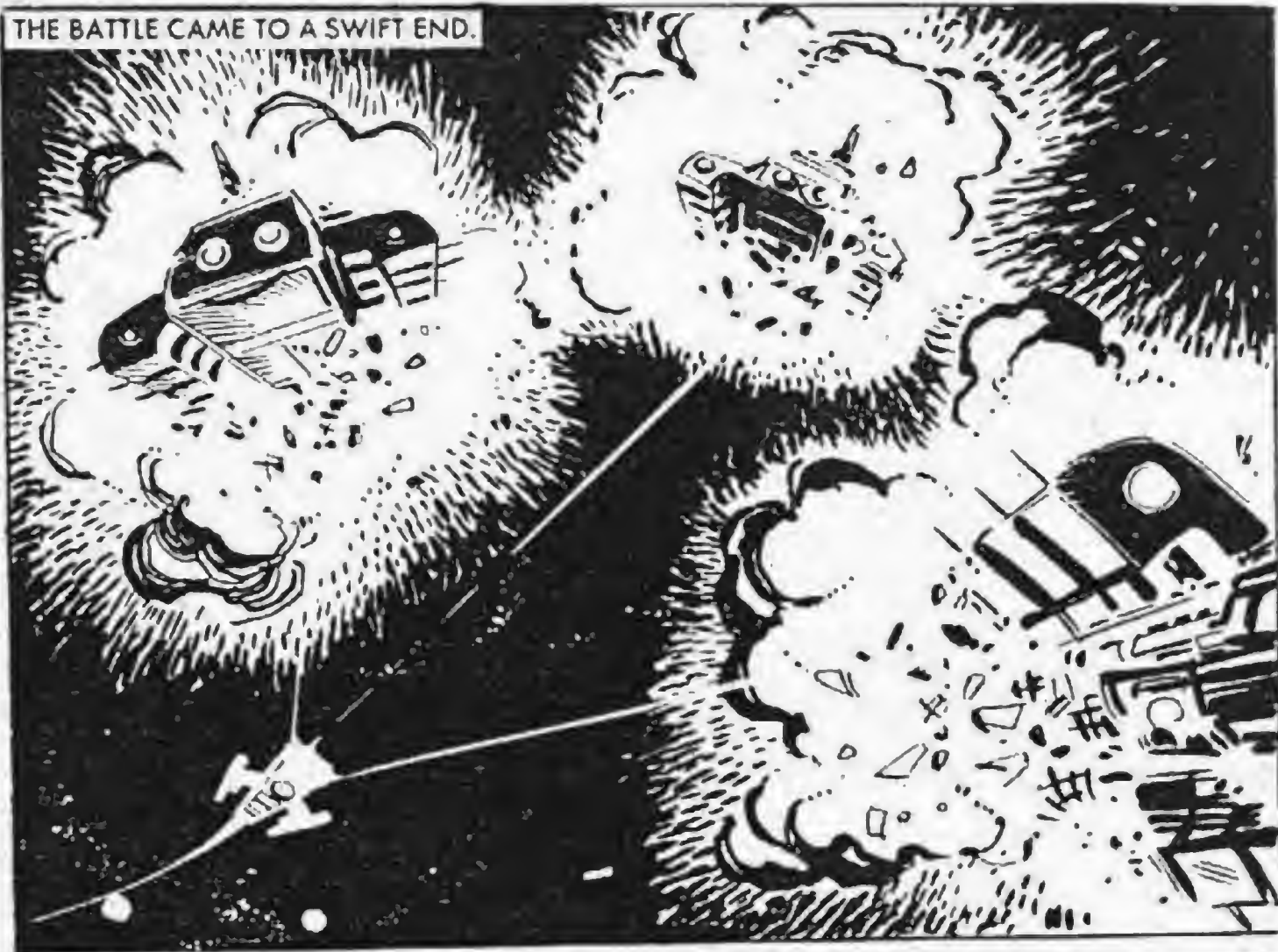


DEFENCE SCREEN ACTIVATED. IMPACT IN FIVE SECONDS. RETALIATORY STRIKE LAUNCHED.

THE CETIAN MISSILES EXPLODED HARMLESSLY ON CONTACT WITH THE R102'S FORCESHIELD.



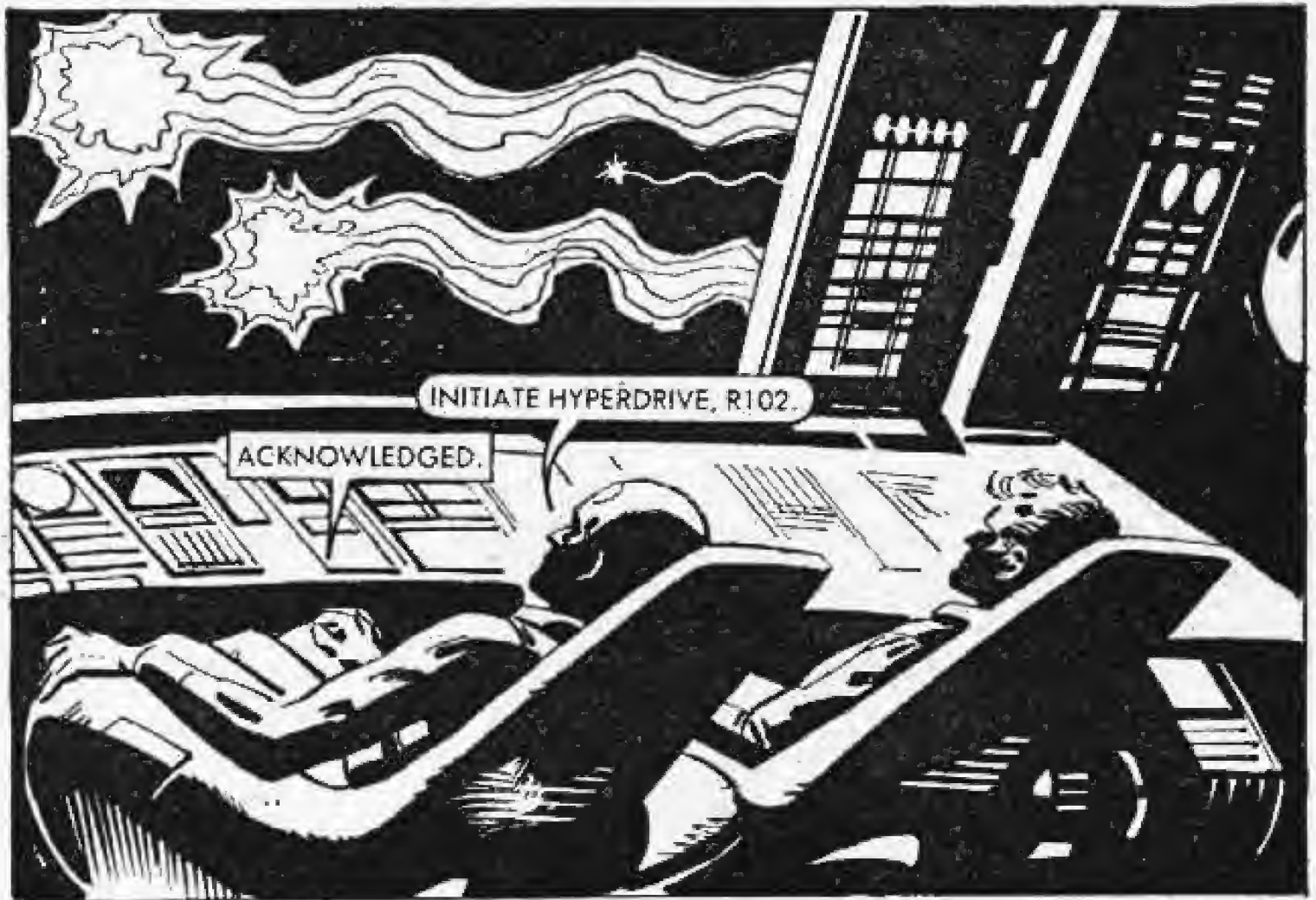
THE BATTLE CAME TO A SWIFT END.



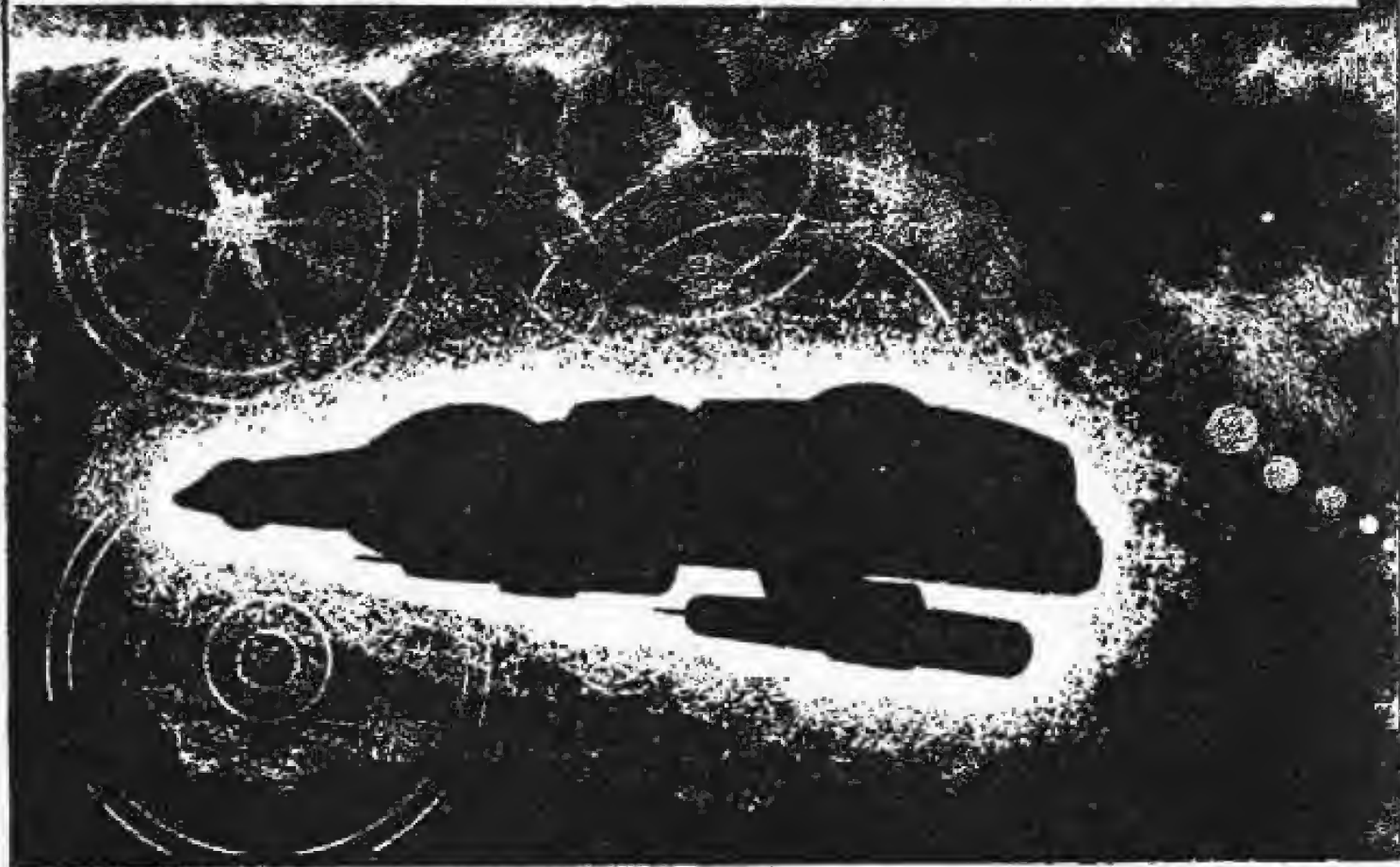
WE DID IT!

R102 DID IT. NOT ONLY EQUIPPED WITH
HYPERDRIVE, BUT WITH AN ENERGY SCREEN AS
WELL. THE EARTHMEN CERTAINLY KNOW HOW TO
BUILD SHIPS.





AS THE GREAT SHIP LEAPT ACROSS THE LIGHT YEARS CONSCIOUSNESS DESERTED THE CREW.



FORTY NINE UNITS LATER —

VANT! VANT! WAKE UP!



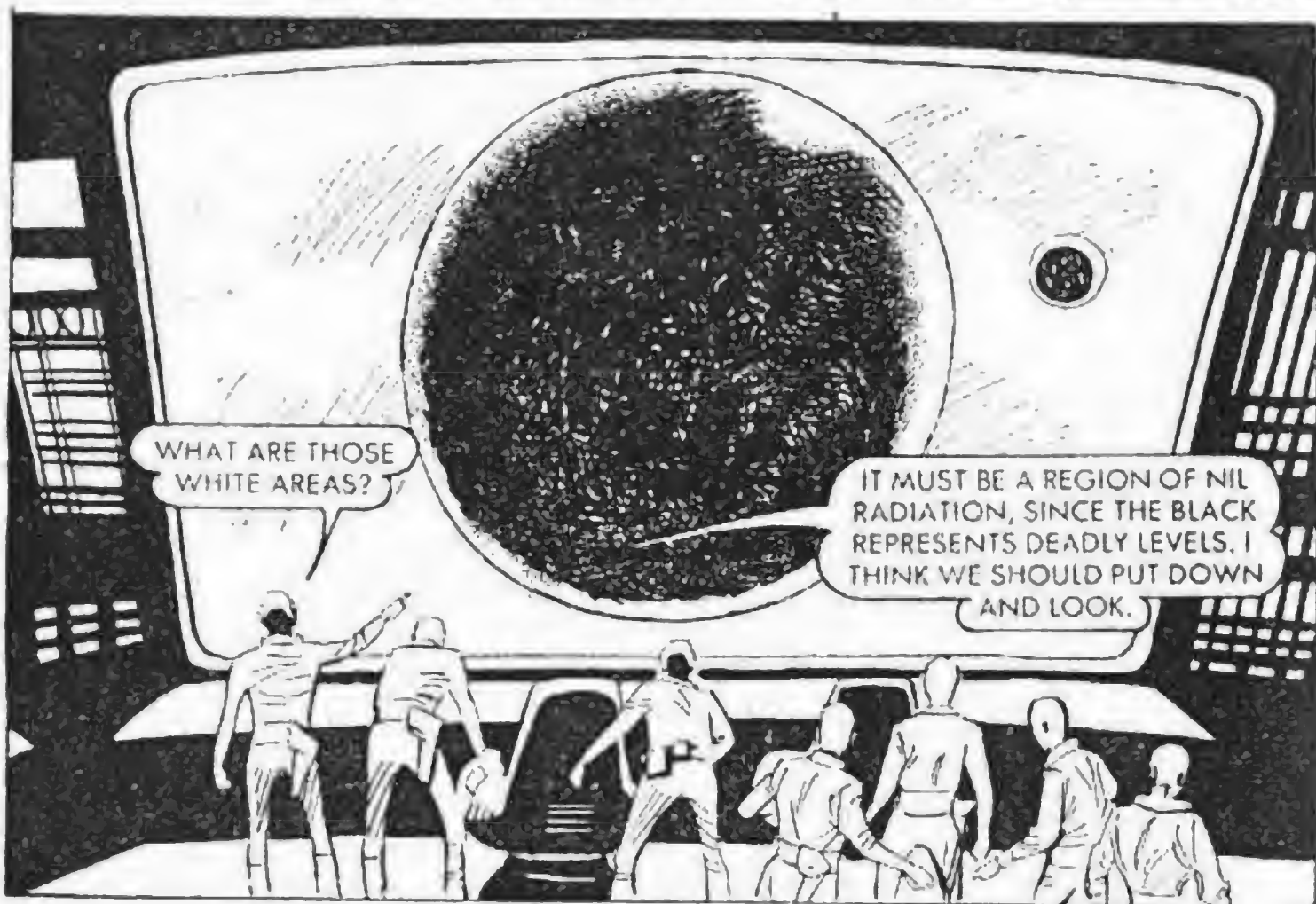


ALL WE CAN DO IS TAKE MORE DETAILED SCANS. R102, GIVE US A RONTGEN REPRESENTATION OF RADIOACTIVITY ON THE PLANET.



WHAT ARE THOSE WHITE AREAS?

IT MUST BE A REGION OF NIL RADIATION, SINCE THE BLACK REPRESENTS DEADLY LEVELS. I THINK WE SHOULD PUT DOWN AND LOOK.



R102 WAS GUIDED IN TO LAND AT CO-ORDINATES 56.5°N, 3°W.





AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL...

EARTHSHIPS!
A WHOLE FLEET.

BUT WHERE ARE THE CREWS?



WHAT THE —?

A HOLOGRAM IMAGE!
LISTEN TO IT.



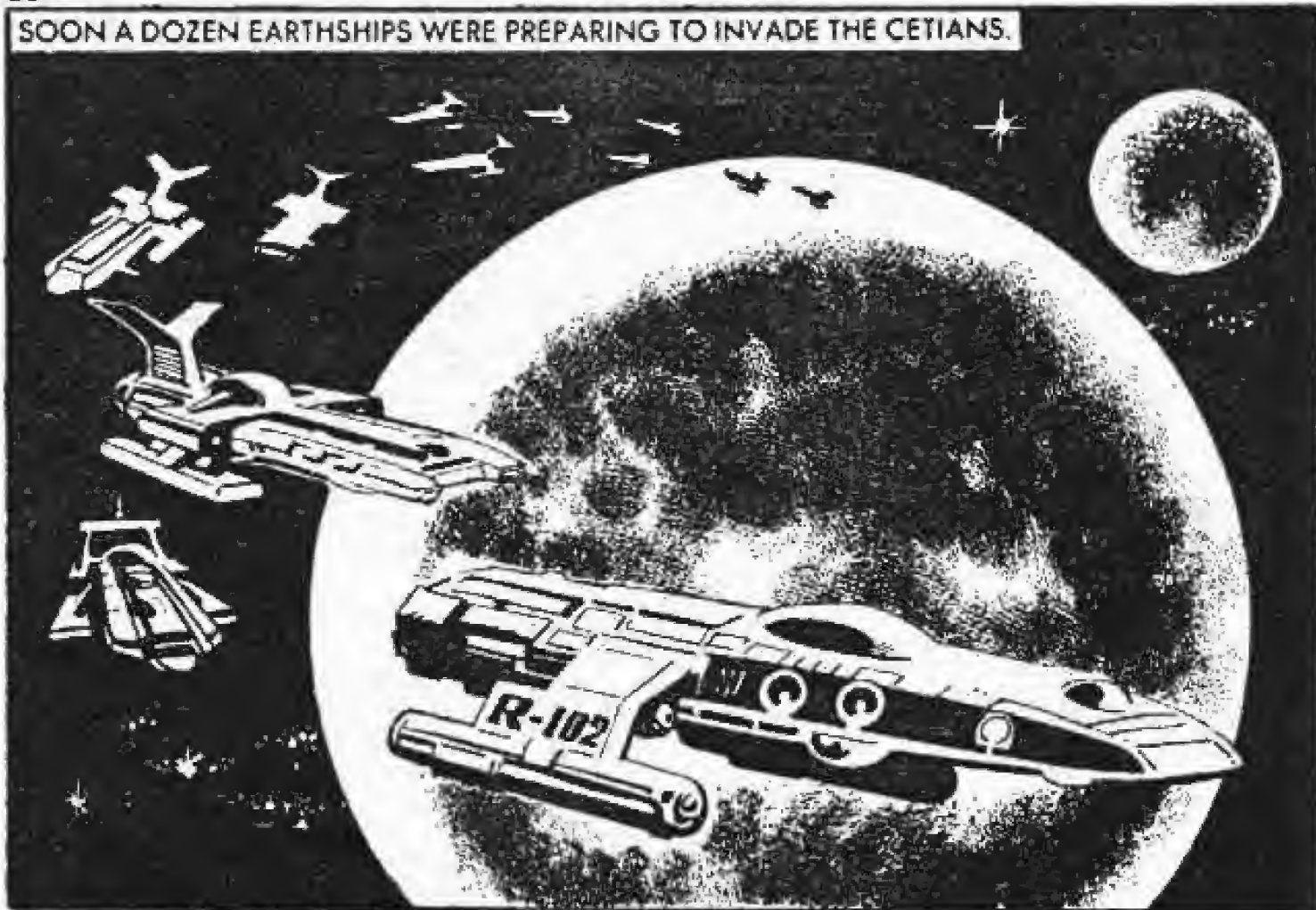
WELCOME TO EARTH. I AM TONINUS. I AM TO TELL ALL VISITORS OF THE DOWNFALL OF EARTH AND HER EMPIRE. WHEN THE GALACTIC EMPIRE WAS AT ITS HEIGHT, CIVIL WAR BROKE OUT ON EARTH — OPPOSING FACTIONS WANTED CONTROL OF THE GALAXY.

THE PLANET WAS SO RAVAGED BY THE WAR THAT IT BECAME UNINHABITABLE. THE SURVIVORS AGREED A PEACE, AND EMIGRATED, LEAVING BEHIND ALL THE WEAPONS THAT HAD BEEN THE CAUSE OF THE CATASTROPHE. YOU ARE THE DESCENDANTS OF THESE PEOPLE.





SOON A DOZEN EARTHSHIPS WERE PREPARING TO INVADE THE CETIANS.



CONFIRM YOUR COURSE AND PREPARE FOR
HYPERDRIVE. IS YOUR JOB CLEAR, MIK?



YES, SOLA. WHILE YOU ATTACK THE CETIANS, I WILL RETURN TO OUR GALACTIC H.Q. TO FETCH CREWS FOR THE SPACECRAFT ON EARTH THEN WE WILL PICK UP THE REMAINING AND JOIN THE FIGHT.

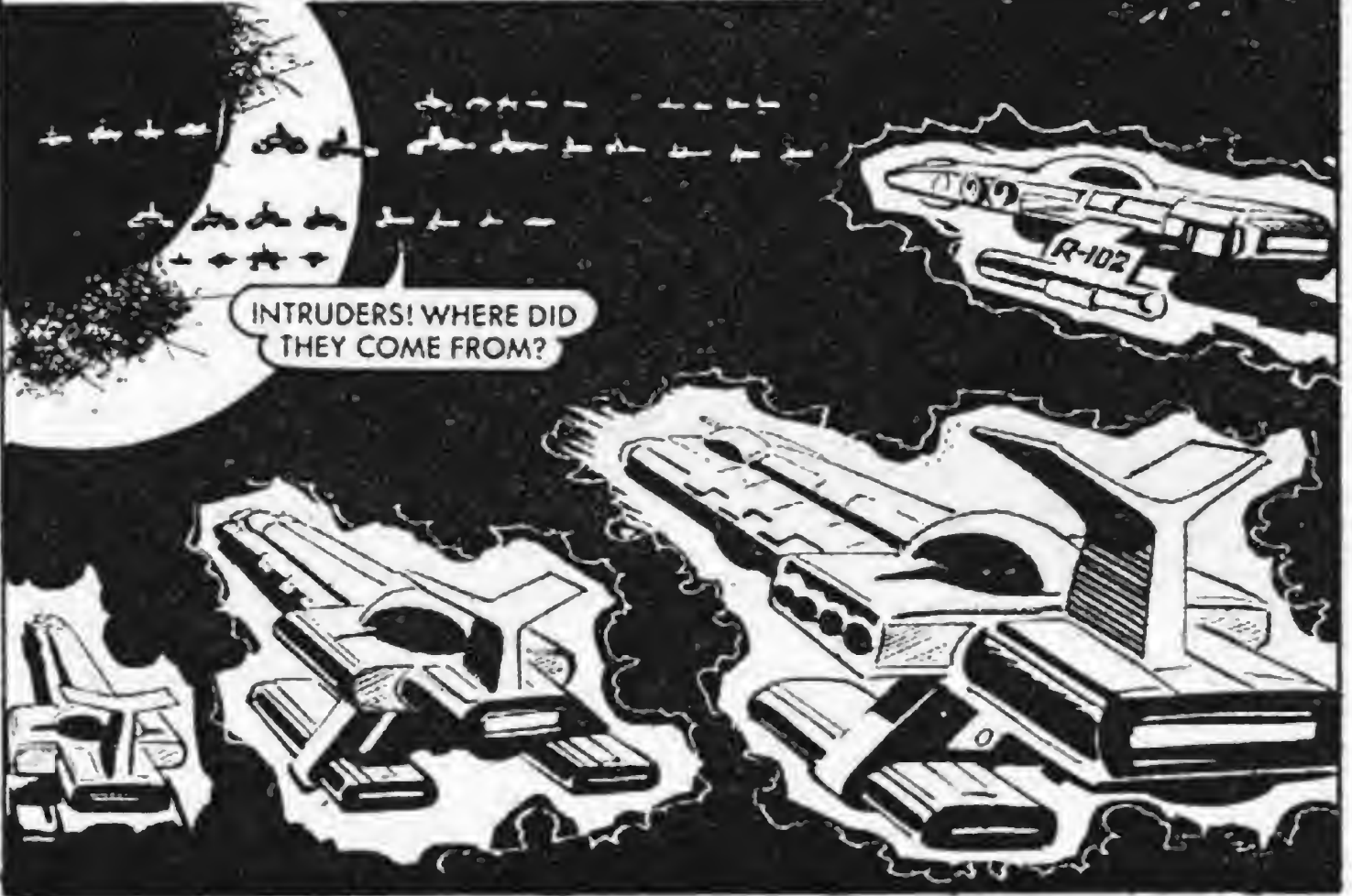


YOU'VE GOT IT.
LET'S GO.



IT TOOK LESS THAN 50 UNITS TO REACH CETIAN SPACE...

INTRUDERS! WHERE DID
THEY COME FROM?



THE CETIANS WERE NO MATCH FOR THE EARTH FLEET.



THIS IS IT, TROOPS!
CETUS IS WIDE OPEN.

THEY'VE BROKEN THROUGH!
WE CAN'T HOLD THEM!



THE CETIAN HIVE-CITIES FELL TO THE MIGHT AND ANGER OF THE EARTH PEOPLE.



SOLA'S FIRST TASK WAS TO FREE THE MANY ALLIED FEDERATION PRISONERS.

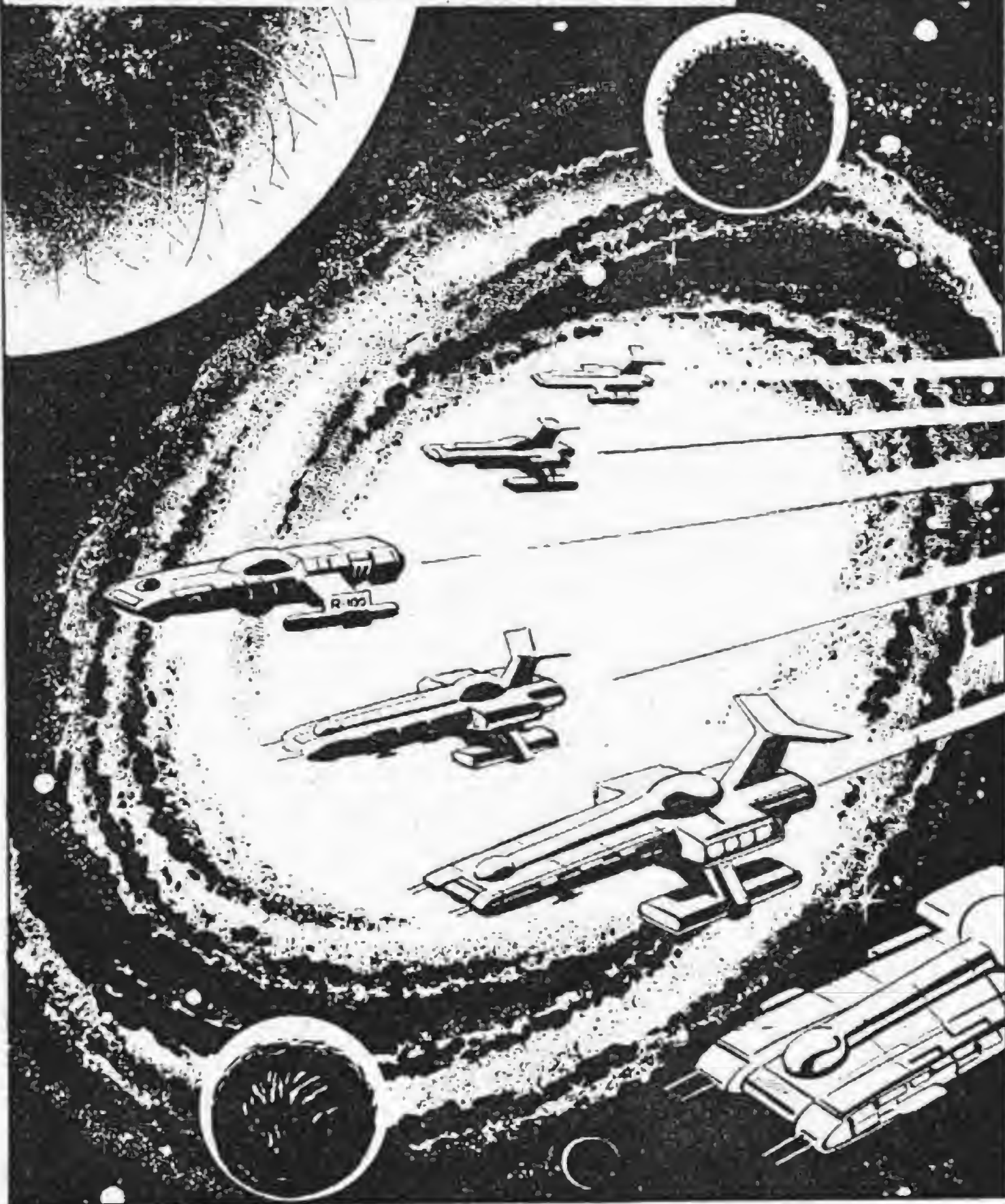
NOW THAT THE PRISONERS ARE
SAFE WE CAN DESTROY ALL
THEIR MILITARY INSTALLATIONS.
SQUADRON... FIRE!

WITH THE CETUS MILITARY MACHINE IN RUINS, THE EARTH SQUADRON TURNED
AWAY FROM THE DEFEATED PLANET.



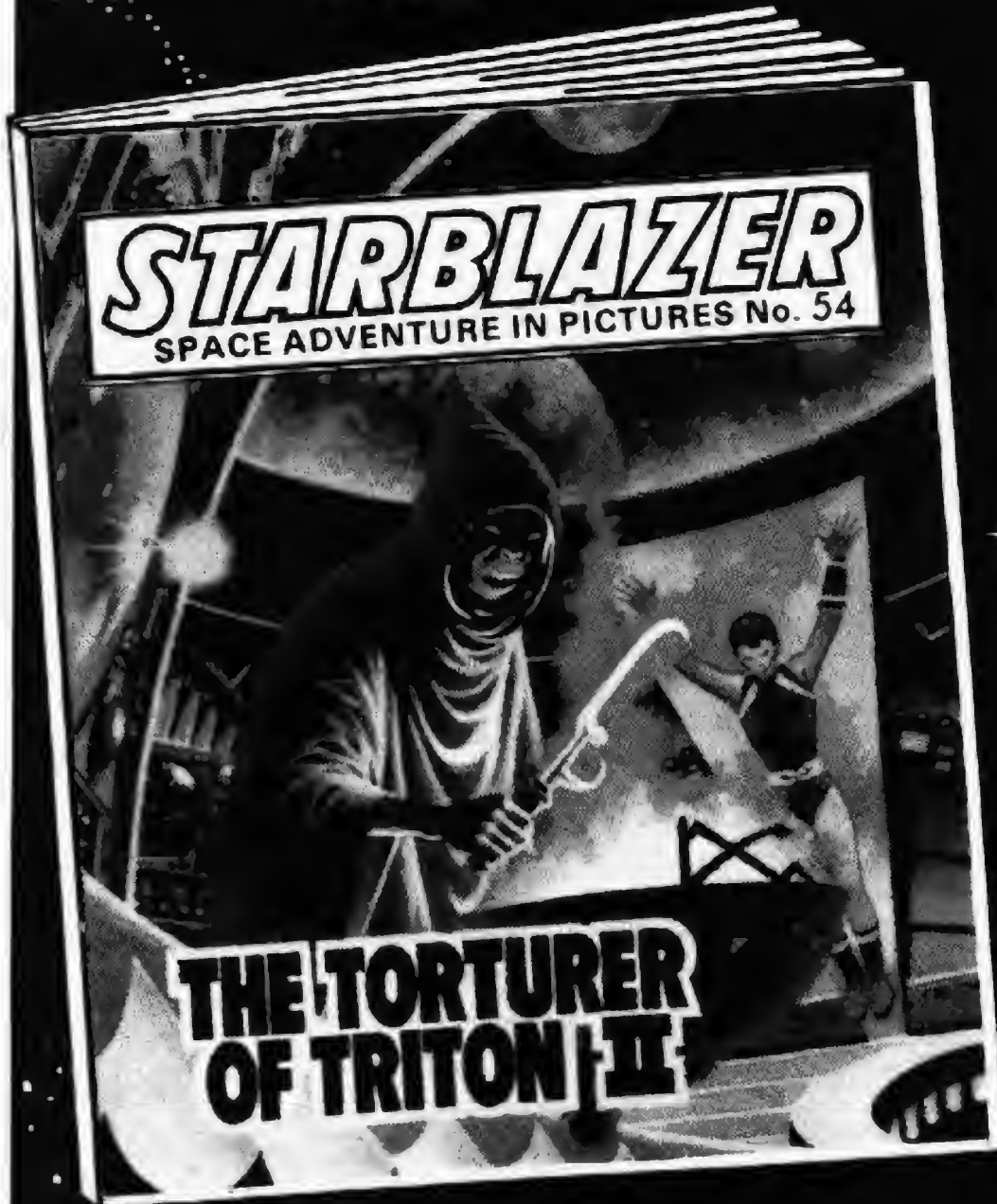


AFTER A THOUSAND YEARS AWAY FROM A DEVASTATED EARTH, ALLIED SHIPS RETURNED TO BEGIN THE SLOW PROCESS OF REBUILDING THE EMPIRE.



Printed and Published in Great Britain by D. C. THOMSON & CO., LTD.,
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**NOW THAT YOU'VE READ
THIS**



**DON'T
FORGET
THAT
THERE'S
ANOTHER
ONE THIS
MONTH**

**IT'S ON SALE IN
YOUR NEWSAGENT'S NOW!**

STARBLAZERS EARTH SATELLITES 4



NASA'S Biosatellites were a series of recoverable biological experiment carriers, first launched in 1966. Bios 3, launched in 1969, carried a space monkey, Bonny, into orbit. The craft's cabin was pressurised with a 80% nitrogen and 20% oxygen atmosphere. Studies were made of Bonny's memory and eye to hand co-ordination. The illustration shows Bios being checked before launch.